

* * * *Notes and Suggestions* * * *

Soviet Historiography and America's Role in the Intervention

GEORGE F. KENNAN*

THE postwar years, and particularly the last decade, have witnessed the appearance in Russia of a considerable body of historical literature devoted either directly or indirectly to Soviet-American relations in the initial period of Soviet power. This literature has been concerned primarily with the role of the United States in the Allied intervention and in the Russian civil war. The attention given to this subject by Soviet historians over the period in question, in fact, has considerably exceeded that which the subject has received in the West during the same years.

While there are significant variations in the degree of ideological coloration, all of this material is written in Communist terms and involves frequent use of expressions that would not be accepted in Western scholarly circles as having any clearly established scientific meaning. Though this naturally complicates the use of the material by Western historians and impedes the normal process of international scholarly discussion, it would not, in itself, constitute an insuperable barrier to the achievement of a certain community of effort, designed to develop at least a body of factual material on which both sides could agree as a starting point for interpretation. But for this there would also be necessary something like a common standard in the treatment and use of historical evidence, and in particular a common willingness to respect not only the individual fact but the preponderant and obvious weight of available factual evidence as the supreme arbiter of historical controversy.

It is this common standard that seems frequently to be lacking. Occasionally, in the perusal of Soviet historical material, one does indeed seem to feel himself in the presence of people from whom he is divided by no

* The Honorable George F. Kennan, formerly United States ambassador to the Soviet Union, is now a professor in the School of Historical Studies, the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey. His major publication is *Soviet-American Relations, 1917-1920* (2 vols., Princeton, N. J., 1956, 1958).

very deep and significant gulf in this respect. This is particularly the case when one is dealing with phases of history in which the Soviet Union or the Russian Communist party were not directly involved. Even with reference to the history of the early period of Soviet foreign relations there have been Soviet historians whose practices in this regard did not differ too widely from those of Western scholarship, or, for that matter, of the great Russian historians of the past. But generally in these recent years—especially before 1953 and after 1956—Soviet historiography on this latter subject has been marked by an attitude toward the rules of historical evidence that has brought deep discouragement to those on the Western side who had hoped, in turning to the works of their Soviet colleagues, for aid and enrichment in their own efforts to understand and illuminate the period in question. The purpose of this article is to illustrate why this is so.

The volume of the relevant material is great, and random examples would probably not suffice to indicate the intensity of the practices to which a Western historian might have to take exception. For this reason, I have chosen, by way of example, a single, relatively brief document that is both recent and authoritative and touches closely on subjects with which I am particularly familiar. My selection is the chapter entitled "Concerning the Role of the Imperialists of the USA in Carrying Out the Intervention in the USSR in the Years 1917-1920," from the volume *Concerning Certain Questions of the History of the Civil War in the USSR*, by S. F. Naida.¹

Naida is a military historian and a prominent and responsible figure in the Soviet academic community. A doctor of historical sciences, a leading member of the historical faculty of Moscow University, and reportedly a major general by rank, he has specialized in the history of the Russian civil war of 1918-1920. In 1956 he was director of the Section for the History of the Civil War in the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, under the Central Committee of the Communist party. He is one of those who has been completing the work on the official Soviet history of the civil war. He has been an active critic of the work of other Soviet writers on the civil war and the intervention. Some months ago he assumed the editorship of one of the leading Soviet historical magazines, *Voprosy istorii* (Questions of History). These facts would suggest that he stands relatively high in the ranks of Soviet historians in point of experience, erudition, and authority.

Naida's article contains numbers of sweeping statements for which no detailed argument is offered. The "American imperialists," we are told, re-

¹ S. F. Naida, *O nekotorykh voprosakh istorii grazhdanskoi voiny v S.S.S.R.* (Moscow, 1958), 70-105.

peatedly tried to strangle the Soviet state in its infancy, to take merciless reprisals on the workers and peasants, to turn Russia into an American colony. They tried, it is said, to prolong the world war in 1917-1918. They secretly sought the strengthening of Germany as a result of the war. In particular, they were, we are assured, the *principal* organizers "of *all* the forces of external and internal revolution [in Russia].... The *leading* initiators of anti-Soviet intervention and the incendiaries of the civil war...." They were "the initiators of *all* the campaigns of the Entente and *all* the more major anti-Soviet conspiracies, diversionary actions and blockades of Russia, of her partition, and of the creation on her territory of a series of small states. . . ."²

With allegations of this order one obviously cannot deal in the space of a single article. There is, however, one general feature of Naida's chapter of which special mention must be made. In the course of thirty-five pages, he uses some eighty times the phrase "American imperialists." In addition, a number of similar expressions of equal vagueness—"the American reactionaries," "the American capitalists," "imperialist circles of the USA," "American bourgeois politicians," "the interventionists," "aggressive imperialist circles," "the American millionaires," "American leading circles"—are employed. I cannot refrain from pointing out that these expressions are not sufficiently precise to serve a serious historical purpose. They are so imprecise, in fact, that serious evaluation of statements in which they are used becomes itself difficult.

Whom does Naida mean when he refers to the "American imperialists"? In some instances the reference is apparently to the United States government; in others the context would suggest that he has private American business concerns in mind. In one case the expression is evidently used to refer to the American Relief Administration. To judge the accuracy of many of his statements one would have to know precisely which of these organizations or categories he is considering.

So much for the generalities. Let us now examine a small selection of the detailed points made in Naida's article.

1. *The statement* [p. 82]:

In the first days after the establishment of Soviet power, the American Military Mission addressed itself, at the General Field Headquarters, to General Dukhonin and other tsarist generals with a summons not to recognize Soviet power but to employ the resources of the Headquarters for the creation of an all-Russian bourgeois government.

² *Ibid.*, 88 (italics are mine).

The facts:

Major Monroe C. Kerth, the United States military representative at headquarters, addressed to General N. N. Dukhonin on November 27, 1917, a protest against the conclusion by the Russians of a separate armistice with the Germans. The key passage in this one-sentence communication read as follows:

. . . since the United States of America and Russia are united in fact in a war which is essentially a struggle of democracy against autocracy, my Government protests categorically and vigorously against any form of separate armistice that might be concluded by Russia. . . .³

The letter contained no reference to the question of recognition of Soviet power or to the creation of an all-Russian bourgeois government.

The actual text of Kerth's letter was not unavailable to Naida. It appears verbatim in the third volume of the *History of the Civil War in the USSR*, prepared by a group of scholars of whom Naida was one, under the supervision of an editorial commission among the members of which his name appears in first place.

2. *The statement* [p. 83]:

At the same time [around the time of the October revolution] the foreign imperialists and particularly the imperialists of the USA attached great importance to the organization of counterrevolutionary bourgeois-nationalist governments, intending to utilize them as weapons for the overthrow of Soviet power.

Thus the American consul in Tiflis Smith, Ambassador Francis and the Consul General in Moscow Summers tried as early as 1917 to create a federation of the Trans-Caucasus, the Kuban, Terek and Don regions and the Ukraine, headed by bourgeois nationalist governments, in order to obtain in the south of Russia a theater of action for the struggle against the Soviet state.

At the direction of Francis and of the State Department of the USA, Consul Smith participated in the creation in 1918 of the counterrevolutionary bourgeois nationalist governments of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaidzhan.

The facts:

Throughout the period under reference, American Consul F. Willoughby Smith, stationed at Tiflis, bombarded his superiors in the United States government with somewhat confused requests that he be authorized to encourage the establishment of an autonomous regional administration in that part of Russia and the utilization of native units from this region in the Russian army on the Turkish front. When, after the Communist seizure of

³ From a French translation included in the article "Nakanune peremiriya," *Krasny arkhiv*, XXIII (1927), 195-249.

power in Petrograd, this latter army began to disintegrate under the demoralizing impact of the Soviet move for an armistice on the European front, Smith asked for money to help hold the army together and to support whatever continued military efforts might be possible.

All of these requests were plainly motivated by the belief that they would serve the over-all military interests of the Allies in the war against Germany. Some predated the October revolution, and therefore could scarcely have been directed to the overthrow of Soviet power. None was granted. The American ambassador at Petrograd, David R. Francis, on October 5, 1917, notified Smith that the step he was then recommending (assignment of local territorial units to the Turkish front) was considered to be "one relating to internal affairs in which the Embassy can take no action."⁴ So far as I can ascertain, Smith received four instructions from the Department of State during this period. On November 26, 1917, he was told that the Department "cannot encourage tendencies in any of these directions."⁵ On December 15, the Department wired: "...do not commit this Government."⁶ On December 28, it stated: "Only instructions for you for present are to keep us informed."⁷ Similarly, on March 30, 1918: "The United States is not in a position to support active military operations on Caucasus front."⁸

Smith's tendency to exceed his authority was the subject of much anxiety to his superiors both in Russia and in Washington, among others to his immediate supervisory chief, Consul General Maddin Summers in Moscow. On January 10, 1918, Summers wrote privately to the counselor of the American embassy at Petrograd, J. Butler Wright, to confirm his own impression that Smith had been exceeding his instructions in his various initiatives.⁹ Wright, in his reply, concurred with Summers' judgment, and expressed his own concern over the situation. There is no evidence whatsoever of an instruction from either Summers or Francis or the Department of State to Smith, encouraging him along the lines of his own recommendations.

One is constantly struck, in reading Soviet diplomatic history, by the freedom with which the recommendations or personal views of individual junior officials of "bourgeois" governments are cited as evidence of official policy, regardless of whether they were approved and supported by the responsible superiors of these officials. There seems to be no recognition of the

⁴ *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918, Russia* (3 vols., Washington, D. C., 1931-32), II, 578. Hereafter cited as *FR*.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 582.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 590.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 601.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 623.

⁹ Petrograd Embassy 800. File, 1918, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

fact that people could honestly disagree, and honestly express this disagreement.

3. *The statement* [p. 83]:

The American imperialists in 1918 established contacts with the Ukrainian bourgeois-nationalist Central Rada; and in the beginning of 1919, having extended to the Petlyuravites major aid through the French, they suggested the recognition by the Entente of the counterrevolutionary Petlyura government—the Directorate.

The facts:

In the summer of 1917, just prior to the establishment of Soviet power, the United States government had taken up with the provisional government the question of the opening of a United States consulate at Kiev. Before a reply was made, the Communist seizure of power occurred in Petrograd. A few weeks later, in mid-December 1917, the Ukraine being still effectively outside the control of the new Soviet government, Ambassador Francis detailed Consul Douglas Jenkins to Kiev to find out what could be done about the opening of the consulate. He specifically (these are his own words) "cautioned Jenkins against recognizing any government" in that part of Russia.¹⁰ Jenkins proceeded to Kiev and spent some weeks there waiting for the situation to clarify itself. Fearing that a political interpretation might be given to any contacts he might have with the Ukrainian authorities, he refrained for a period of several weeks from even making a courtesy call at the "foreign office" of the Ukrainian Rada in Kiev. Only on January 23, 1918, when forced to do so by a governmental order (to which he would otherwise have been subject) to the effect that all nonresidents should leave Kiev, did he call on the foreign minister of the Rada in order to ask permission to remain. The report of the conversation, as given by Jenkins to the Department of State in a confidential despatch, was as follows:

Mr. Schulgin met me pleasantly and said there would be no objection whatever to my remaining in Kieff. He said some pleasant things about the United States and I talked about the attractiveness of Kieff and the very evident possibilities of great agricultural and industrial development in the Ukraine.¹¹

This is as close to the sinister as Jenkins' mission ever came. Shortly thereafter the Rada made a separate peace with the Germans. Kiev was swallowed up by the renewed German military advance, and all Allied representatives were obliged to leave. No exchange of views on a political subject

¹⁰ See Francis' telegram to the Secretary of State, No. 2090, Dec. 12, 1917, *FR*, 1918, *Russia*, II, 649-50.

¹¹ Petrograd Embassy 800. File, 1918, despatch from Jenkins of Jan. 23, 1918, to the Petrograd Embassy, National Archives.

took place between the United States government and the Rada. There is no evidence of any political interest being manifested in this body at any time by any responsible American statesman.

As for Simon Petlyura and the Directorate (the regime which took over briefly in the Ukraine following the departure of the Germans in the fall of 1918), I am unable to imagine where Naida could have found evidence indicating that recognition of Petlyura was "suggested" by the United States government in the beginning of 1919. The major American statesmen were at that time attending the Paris Peace Conference. Their concern at the moment was to clarify the question of possible Russian representation at the Conference; and pending such clarification they were wholly disinclined to take any unilateral action with regard to any of the competing factions in Russia.

Could Naida have had in mind here the Prinkipo proposal? It would be a curious flight of interpretation to describe Wilson's acquiescence in this proposal as a suggestion for recognition of Petlyura. It could just as aptly be described as a suggestion for recognition of the Soviet government.

The representatives of the Ukrainian Directorate in Paris had dealings (if their memoirs may be believed) with only two responsible American figures at the Peace Conference: with Professor Robert H. Lord of Harvard University and (in a single interview of June 3, 1919) with Secretary of State Robert Lansing. In the memoirs of one of these Ukrainian representatives, Arnold D. Margolin, it was stated that Professor Lord "as a rule . . . refrained from expressing his views and limited himself to asking us questions." Lansing, Margolin relates, showed himself "lamentably misinformed" about the situation in Eastern Europe and frankly hostile to the establishment of an independent Ukrainian regime.¹² The Ukrainians received from him not the slightest encouragement in their quest for recognition by the Allied powers.

As for the alleged extension of major aid to the Petlyuravites by the United States through the French, the source of this charge is again not indicated. What the French themselves did is another matter, but that they were in any way encouraged by the United States government to assist Petlyura seems most improbable. When, in the autumn of 1919, the Department of State discovered that the American Liquidation Commission in Paris, charged with the disposal of surplus army clothing and supplies, had contracted to sell certain of this material to the representatives of the Ukrainian Directorate, it at once remonstrated with the Commission and asked that

¹² Arnold D. Margolin, *From a Political Diary: Russia, the Ukraine, and America 1905-1945* (New York, 1946), 47-48.

the contract, if possible, be annulled. The Department expressed itself, in this connection, "disposed to regard the Ukrainian separatist movement as largely the result of Austrian and German propaganda seeking the disruption of Russia."¹³ The materials, so far as I am able to ascertain, got no nearer to the Ukraine than a warehouse in Marseilles.

4. *The statement* [p. 83]:

On December 3, 1917, on the initiative of the American imperialists, there convened a special conference in which the USA, England, France and allied countries participated, and at which it was decided to organize in the immediate future an open, anti-Soviet military intervention, in which connection the participants in the conference distributed among themselves the roles to be played in this dirty business. The principal role in the Far East, in Siberia and in considerable degree in the North, the USA took upon itself. They expected, having once seized the basic regions of Russia, to gain a foothold, with the help of the White-Czechoslovak Corps and the adherents of Kolchak, to seize positions in the Urals as well, to push through to the Volga, to penetrate to the south and, having thus created a wide theater of operations, to put an end speedily to Soviet power.

The facts:

It is difficult to know to what conference Naida has reference. The period in question was before the abandonment by the Soviet government of the old Julian calendar. In other instances, Naida employs the double date; but in this instance he gives no indication whether his December 3 is based on the old calendar or the new one.

The content suggests that if the old calendar was used, the reference might conceivably be to the Anglo-French diplomatic discussions that took place in Paris on December 22-23 (on the Western calendar), and at which indeed the participants did agree on a rough allotment of the areas in southern Russia in which each should act to do what could be done to restore local resistance to the Germans. But the Old Style dates of these discussions are correctly named in the official *History of the Civil War in the USSR* on which Naida collaborated, as December 9-10, not December 3. This meeting, furthermore, did not take place on American initiative. The United States did not participate, nor did any other of the Allied powers aside from the French and British. The idea of promoting a counterrevolution in Russia, incidentally, was specifically repudiated by the participants.

We are left to conclude, therefore, that Naida's date was based on the new calendar, in which case the reference could have been only to an informal meeting on December 3, 1917, at the French Foreign Office, of a number of the senior Allied statesmen who happened to be in Paris at that time for the

¹³ *FR, 1919, Russia* (Washington, D. C., 1937), 783-84.

sessions of the Inter-Allied Conference and the Supreme War Council. The meeting in question was one of a series of such meetings held in the last days of November and the first days of December. The need for these conferences as a means of coordinating the wartime policies of the Allies was obvious, and the presence of the various statesmen in Paris provided a natural occasion for them. It would be inaccurate to attribute them to the "initiative" of any particular power, particularly the United States. The French were of course the official hosts. The American representative was the personal emissary of President Wilson, Colonel Edward M. House.

At the meeting on December 3, Colonel House did not initiate in any way the discussion of Russian matters. Marshal Foch, however, introduced a number of resolutions, the first of which envisaged Allied occupation of the Trans-Siberian Railway as a means of assuring a line of communications to the Rumanian army, which had been placed in an extremely precarious situation by the Bolshevik peace move. The Japanese representatives, British Foreign Minister Balfour, and Colonel House all spoke in opposition to this resolution, and it was not accepted. Writing in his diary that evening, Colonel House referred to the meeting as follows:

I sat in with the Prime Ministers at eleven o'clock. . . . General Foch was there and introduced one foolish resolution after another. It has lessened my good opinion of him. Balfour leaned over and said to me: "Did you ever hear of such proposals?"¹⁴

It is abundantly plain, not only from the record of this meeting, but from a number of evidences of his personal views, that House was strongly opposed at that time, and for months afterward, to any form of Allied intervention in Russia, fearing that any such action would tend to throw the Russians into the arms of the Germans. He was fully aware, furthermore, that President Wilson had similar views. He would not, therefore, have been in a position to encourage any schemes of this nature during the period of his visit to Paris in November-December 1917.

Even had Foch's proposal been approved, Naida's statement would still be wide of the mark. No division of roles of the sort he alleges was involved in what was discussed at this meeting. Particularly absurd is the charge that the "American imperialists" were scheming to use the Czechoslovak Corps and the "Kolchakovites" as means of gaining a foothold in the Urals. The Czechs were at that time still in line on the eastern European front. The idea that they should be evacuated through Siberia had not yet been even seriously discussed. Admiral Aleksandr Kolchak, for his part, was at that mo-

¹⁴ Diary, Dec. 3, 1917, Edward M. House MSS, Yale University Library.

ment in Yokohama, attempting to return to Russia from the United States. He had heard of the Bolshevik seizure of power only on the day he sailed from San Francisco. He was now wholly uncertain as to his plans, and had discussed them with no American official. Neither he nor anyone else could conceivably have guessed that one year later he would be in a position to play a political role in Siberia.

5. *The statement* [pp. 84, 85]:

Above all, the government of the USA promised the Soviet government economic and military aid, on condition that it continue the war with Germany.

In promising aid to the Soviet government, the American imperialists advanced a number of conditions. Thus they demanded, for example, that the Soviet government permit the USA, England and France to bring troops into Soviet Russia for "the common struggle" against the Austro-German and Turkish troops, and that the military training of the formations of the Red Army and Fleet should be placed in the hands of American, English and French "instructors" as well as of tsarist generals, admirals and officers, in which connection the institution of [military] commissars should be abolished, [etc.]...

The facts:

At no time did the United States government promise military or economic aid to the Soviet government during the First World War. The efforts of American representatives in Russia to induce the United States government to do just this were unsuccessful without exception. The nearest the United States government ever came to a communication to the Soviet government on this subject was the message addressed by President Wilson to the Fourth Special All-Russian Congress of Soviets, convened in March 1918 to consider ratification of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. In this message, the President, after expressing sympathy with the Russian people, went on to say:

Although the Government of the United States is unhappily not now in a position to render the direct and effective aid it would wish to render, I beg to assure the people of Russia through the Congress that it will avail itself of every opportunity to secure for Russia once more complete sovereignty and independence in her own affairs...¹⁵

Shortly after the dispatch of the President's message, meetings of the Allied chiefs of mission and military attachés in Russia took place in Vologda. Here various questions of Allied policy toward the Soviet government were discussed, including the question as to the terms on which military aid to the Soviet government should be extended, in the event it were to be extended at all. On April 3, the French representatives brought in to one of these

¹⁵ The text of Wilson's message to the Soviet Congress will be found in *FR, 1918, Russia, I*, 395-96.

meetings the draft of a *procès-verbal* devoted to this question. The draft's contents would suggest that it was this document which served as the basis for Naida's statement concerning the conditions the "American imperialists" are supposed to have placed on their alleged offer of military assistance.¹⁶

Francis never forwarded this document to the State Department, nor did he even specifically mention its existence. It is clear that he did not accept it, for he cabled Washington that on two points (both ones at issue in the French draft) he had not been able to accept the views of his colleagues and that they had consented to defer such demands for the present. Nevertheless, the Department of State, worried lest Francis go too far, wired him: "... do not give Soviet promise military support as requested in queries submitted through you and through military attaché. . . ."¹⁷ This put an end to further American participation in the discussion. No such proposal was ever made to the Soviet government in the name of the government of the United States.

6. *The statement* [p. 86]:

The American imperialists took most active part in the organization of the mutiny of the Czechoslovak Corps. . . . Thus, as early as the autumn of 1917 in Kiev, and then in December in Jassy, American representatives conducted negotiations with representatives of . . . Masaryk concerning the use of this Corps for the struggle against Soviet power. Masaryk's agent, the officer Cherzhenski, was asked pointblank the question: ". . . is the Czechoslovak army prepared for an armed uprising against the Bolsheviks and will it be able to occupy the region between the Don and Bessarabia?" American representatives also met with Masaryk himself, who was in Russia in the winter of 1917-1918. From March 1918 these negotiations were continued in Washington, where Masaryk had gone in order finally to sell the soldiers of the Czechoslovak Corps to the American imperialists.

The facts:

That Tomáš Masaryk should have occasionally met with Americans in Russia in 1917-1918 is in no way surprising and proves nothing. He was a highly respected Allied statesman, and he had normal social relations with his Allied colleagues in Russia. How such relations could be taken as evidence that he and these Americans conspired to use the Czechoslovak Corps for an armed action against the Bolsheviks is wholly unclear.

Masaryk was personally, throughout this period, firmly averse to any schemes that involved the retention of the Corps in Russia. The desire to as-

¹⁶ The French text of this document will be found in Joseph Noulens, *Mon ambassade en Russie soviétique, 1917-1919* (2 vols., Paris, 1933), II, 56-57. An English text was sent to the War Department by the American military attaché in Russia. A copy can now be found in the State Department File 861.00/1730½, National Archives.

¹⁷ FR, 1918, Russia, I, 494-95.

sure its evacuation to the western front was the guiding motive of his entire activity in Russia in 1917 and 1918. The disintegration of the Russian army and the Bolshevik peace move in late 1917 made evacuation from the eastern front urgently necessary. These events meant, as Masaryk related in his autobiography, "that we could no longer fight against our enemies in Russia; hence all our effort was concentrated on getting to France."¹⁸ He had the following to say in the same context about the efforts made to involve the Corps at that time in the Russian civil war:

Ranged against our departure were the politicians and military commanders of the Tsarist and pre-Bolshevik Russia. Generals [L. G.] Kornilov and [M. V.] Alekseyev, and also [Paul N.] Milyukov, among others, pressed me to join them in the fight against the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks and the Ukrainians were also against our departure insofar as they both hoped to win our army over to their side. . . .

All these plans I rejected.¹⁹

When Masaryk left Russia in March 1918, he did so in the confidence that the evacuation of the Corps through Siberia was arranged and assured. His ensuing visit to the United States was motivated largely by his desire to complete these arrangements at the western end. Neither in the statement for the American ambassador in Japan which he prepared while en route, nor in his informal meeting with State Department officials on May 16 (his first real discussion with responsible American government representatives in Washington), nor in his meeting with Secretary of State Lansing on June 3 (ten days after the uprising of the Corps in Siberia), nor in the interview which he finally succeeded (after long delay) in obtaining with President Wilson on June 19, did he show any enthusiasm or interest either for intervention generally or for the suggestion that the Corps should remain in Russia.

The Czechoslovak uprising itself, occurring in late May 1918, was, as is known, the product of orders given by the commanders of the Corps on the spot. The course followed by these commanders in authorizing the revolt against Soviet authority not only ran counter to the expressed wishes of Masaryk and the Czechoslovak National Council but was conceived as a means of avoiding compliance with a directive received from the Council which the commanders considered dangerous to the security of the Corps. It was opposed by the French military liaison officers (the official representatives of the Allied military command in France) attached to the Corps.

The United States government knew nothing of the circumstances out

¹⁸ T. G. Masaryk, *Die Weltrevolution* (Berlin, 1925), 198.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

of which the Czechoslovak uprising arose and had not the slightest relation to its outbreak.

In support of his charge that the Americans were conspiring with Masaryk as early as autumn 1917 to use the Corps to overthrow the Soviet government, Naida cites a question said to have been asked by an unnamed person (he does not say this was an American, but allows his readers to infer that it was) of a Czechoslovak officer on an unnamed occasion and in a context unspecified. For this he gives a footnote source which, when pursued, brings the reader to a Soviet book published in 1922, now long out of print and apparently unavailable in the United States.²⁰ The incident in question, if it occurred at all, presumably took place at a conference of Allied military attachés in Jassy in November 1917, at which were discussed a number of rather desperate possible expedients for rescuing the Rumanian army from the impossible position in which it had been placed by the Soviet peace move. The French had an idea at that time of using the Czechoslovak Corps and other non-Russian units loyal to the Allies to form, together with the Rumanians, a nucleus of continued military resistance to the Central Powers on the eastern front. This would have necessitated opening and maintaining a supply route through southern Russia, which was as yet only partially in Bolshevik hands. Any such undertaking would certainly have encountered Soviet opposition and could to this extent have been described as incidentally "anti-Soviet," though its main motivation would have lain in the prosecution of the war against Germany. The idea was presumably discussed, among others, at the Jassy conference. That questions should have been put to the Czechs, in this connection, about the capabilities of the latter for holding territory in southern Russia against the assumed opposition of the Soviet government is not surprising. If true, however, it would not have constituted evidence that the Americans had conspired with Masaryk to overthrow the Soviet government.

7. *The statement* [p. 92]:

In 1919 the State Department of the USA fabricated a map which reflected the

²⁰ The source referred to in Naida's book was Volume III of the above-mentioned *History of the Civil War in the USSR*, 182. This referred, in turn, to B. Šmeral (Šmeral), *Chekhoslováci i Esery* [The Czechoslovaks and the S-R's] (Moscow, 1922). A book published in Russia at a somewhat later date (F. Popov, *Chekhoslovatski myatyesh i Samarskaya uchredilka* [The Czechoslovak Revolt and the Samara Constitutional Assembly] [Moscow, 1932]) cites at greater length the passage in question from Šmeral's book. This quotation suggests that Šmeral himself did not name or describe the questioner to whom he refers. If this is true, then Naida himself knew no more than do his readers who placed the question. None of this dissuaded him from weaving the quotation into the passage in such a way as to suggest that it came from American lips and was proof that the Americans were scheming at that time to use the Czechs for the overthrow of the Soviet government.

schemes of the imperialists for the dismemberment and enslavement of Russia. By way of elucidation of this map it was stated: "All of Russia should be [*sleduyet*'] divided into large natural regions, each with its specific economic life. In this connection no single region should be sufficiently independent to constitute a strong state." [The source for this statement is given as: "D. N. Miller, My Diary of the Conference of Paris. With Documents, New York, 1924, v. IV, pp. 214-220."]

The facts:

The reference here, as evidenced by Naida's footnote, is to an "Outline of Tentative Report and Recommendations," prepared not by the State Department but by the intelligence section of the United States delegation to the Peace Conference for guidance of the President and the delegates. This document was only in the nature of a recommendation. There is no evidence that it was ever formally approved by the President.

The text of the recommendation itself was as follows:

It is recommended:

1) That encouragement be given, at opportune times, to the reunion with Russia of those border regions of the south and west which have broken away and set up their own national governments, particularly the Baltic Provinces and the Ukraine, if reunion can be accomplished within a federalized or genuinely democratic Russia.

2) That there be excepted from the general application of the principle above mentioned Finland, Poland, the Armenians in Transcaucasia, and probably Lithuania. See map 4.²¹

In the subsequent "discussion" the following passage occurred:

Russia may be divided into great natural regions, each with its own distinctive economic life. No one region is self-sufficient enough to form a strong state. The economic welfare of all would be served by reunion on a federal basis, which would, of course, also have other evident advantages.

As will readily be seen, the recommendation was that with the exception of four specific border areas (in two of which the Soviet government had itself already recognized the creation of an independent state) American policy should be *opposed* to the permanent dismemberment of Russia and should favor reunion of the country on a liberal basis, allowing reasonable opportunity for the expression of the will of the respective peoples. This, Naida has contrived to portray as a decision *in favor* of the dismemberment and enslavement of Russia. To support his thesis he has neglected to mention the recommendation itself and has selected for quotation two sentences from the accompanying discussion, into each of which has been inserted a

²¹ David Hunter Miller, *My Diary at the Conference of Paris, with Documents* (21 vols., New York, [1924]), IV, 219.

verb with an imperative connotation (in one case *sleduyet'* [should be]; in the other, *ne dolzhna byt'* [should not, or must not, be]) to replace, respectively, the verbs "may be" and "is," which were actually there and which had no such connotation. This cannot be described otherwise than as a direct mistranslation. By no stretch of the translator's license can the phrase "may be divided" be properly rendered in Russian by *sleduyet' razdelit'*, or the phrase "no one region is self-sufficient enough" by *ni odna oblast' ne dolzhna byt' nastolko samostoyatelnoi*.

I do not mean to suggest that Naida was personally guilty of this mistranslation. It appeared at the height of the anti-American campaign of the years 1950-1952 in the works of two Soviet historians, A. Ye. Kunina and A. I. Melchin.²² Each of these at that time attributed the passage, as does Naida in the present instance, directly to David Hunter Miller's *Diary at the Conference of Paris*. It is worth noting, however, that in the second and more extended edition of her book, which was published in 1954, Madame Kunina had the prudence to omit this quotation altogether, restricting herself on this occasion to comments on the accompanying map. Melchin, similarly, in another work published in 1953,²³ included the passage but took pains to attribute it this time to Madame Kunina and not directly to the Miller diary. Surely these circumstances should have been sufficient to warn Naida against uncritical acceptance.

8. *The statement* [p. 100]:

The secretary of the American YMCA Ralph Albertson wrote that in the Russian North: "Every night American detachments led their victims out in batches and destroyed them," that on one occasion a convoy detachment of Americans shot more than thirty prisoners, that Americans used against Soviet people shells with poisonous substances. Ralph Albertson noted that the American interventionists dealt in a particularly bestial manner with communists, commissars, and political workers, ordering the soldiers not to take them prisoner but to kill them even when they were apprehended unarmed.

The facts:

This is not what Albertson said. These statements are obviously taken from pages seventy-one, eighty-six, and eighty-eight of Albertson's book *Fighting without a War*.²⁴

²² A. Ye. Kunina, *Proval amerikanskikh planov zavoyevaniya mirovogo gospodstva v 1917-1920 gg* [The Failure of the American Plans for the Achievement of World Domination, 1917-1920] (Moscow, 1951); A. I. Melchin, *Amerikanskaya interventsia na sovyetskoi Dalnem vostoke v 1920-1922 godakh* [The Smashing of the American-Japanese Intervention in the Soviet Far East, 1920-1922] (Moscow, 1951).

²³ A. I. Melchin, *Razгром amerikano-yaponskikh interventov na sovyetskoi Dalnem vostoke v 1920-1922 godakh* [The Smashing of the American-Japanese Intervention in the Soviet Far East, 1920-1922] (Moscow, 1953).

²⁴ Ralph Albertson, *Fighting without a War* (New York, 1920).

With respect to the shooting of people in batches at night, what Albertson actually wrote was this:

The execution of suspects made Bolsheviks right and left. The inquisitorial processes of the Russian puppets of the Military Intervention were necessarily so much like those of the old régime that they went far to dispel all illusions about the Military Intervention that might have remained in the peasant mind.

When night after night the firing squad took out its batches of victims it mattered not that no civilians were permitted on the streets. There were thousands of listening ears to hear the rat-tat-tat of the machine guns. . . .²⁵

This passage, it will be noted, not only makes no reference to Americans but plainly and specifically refers to the activities of the Russian units associated with the Allied command.

The remaining statements in Naida's paragraph cited above are all taken from the chapter of Albertson's book entitled "Atrocities." In this chapter there is not a single reference to Americans, nor is there anything that would permit the reader to associate the alleged incidents with American troops. Albertson did *not* say that it was a convoy detachment of *Americans* which shot more than thirty prisoners. He did *not* say that *Americans* used shells with poisonous substances. He did *not* say that *Americans* ordered the men to kill prisoners. I cannot find that Albertson said at any point that anyone, Americans or anyone else, dealt in a particularly bestial manner with "communists, commissars, and political workers."

Albertson was at the front both during the period when the Americans were participating and after their departure. He was, in fact, one of the last Americans to leave. That his reference to "our" atrocities did not necessarily mean Americans is clear from the following fact. The paragraph from which some of Naida's examples are taken also included a passage, omitted in Naida's charge, alleging that in taking the village of Borok "we" killed the civilian commissar in that town and left his bayoneted body lying in the street. Borok, actually, was taken by the British in the course of their final offensive on the Dvina front, in late summer 1919, designed to cover their evacuation. This was well after the departure of the last American troops.

No Americans participated in the senior command of the North Russian intervention or had any part in determining its policies.

As Naida is aware, the method of dealing with prisoners varied in the civil war in the North according to the individual fighting front, the type of unit employed, and the status of the prisoner. On certain fronts, at certain times, and in certain circumstances, the killing of prisoners was the common

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

practice on both sides. On the fronts where the Americans were involved, this was, as Naida should also know, not generally the case.

9. *The statement* [p. 101]:

Together with the English and French interventionists, the American plunderers took part in the establishment in the North of a concentration camp on the island of Mudyug. . . .

A no less terrible camp was established at Iokange, where the American interventionists, together with the British and the French, perpetrated bestial atrocities on the prisoners.

The facts:

The Americans, not participating in the command of the Archangel expedition, had nothing to do with the establishment of either of these places of detention. I cannot find that either was ever visited by an American during the period in question.

The use of Mudyug Island by the Archangel regime as a place of detention for political prisoners began in August 1918. The first group of prisoners was sent there on August 23. This was twelve days before the arrival of the American troops in the Archangel area. Thus the Americans could scarcely have taken part in the establishment of the prison camp there. It was guarded and in part administered, in the first months, by naval personnel from the French men-of-war stationed at Archangel. Later this task was taken over by White Russian detachments.²⁶ At no time did Americans participate in any of this work.

The place of detention at Iokange appears to have been originally established in 1918 by the Russian authorities at Murmansk, for prisoners from that place. No American had anything whatsoever to do with this. The Iokange camp was not used by the Archangel authorities at all until the late summer of 1919. This was well after the departure of the last American forces from the Archangel area.

10. *The statement* [p. 100]:

American troops participated in the cruel repression of the partisan movement in the Ussuri valley in August–September 1918 and in the summer of 1919. Here the American interventionists in the most bestial manner obliterated the entire population of entire regions, acting in the same manner as the bands of Semenov, Kalmykov, the Kolchakovites and the Japanese.

Having occupied the railway branch Vladivostok–Suchan and having seized the Suchan mines, the American interventionists began a merciless persecution of the population, particularly the partisans and their families. At the Skidelski mine, one of the American detachments, headed by a certain Pedders, succeeded in

²⁶ See P. Rasskazov, *Zapiski zaklyuchennogo* [Notes of a Prisoner] (Archangel, 1928).

seizing partisans from among the local workers. The prisoners were subjected to unbelievable torture. The American bandits, as was said in the newspaper "*Krasnaya znamya*" of March 28, 1920, "tortured them one by one, inflicting burns on their bodies, breaking the bones of their hands and feet and then dragging them out in broad daylight to the bushes and shooting dead the half-living people." On another occasion this same Pedders with his band got up a "peasant hunt." In the case of one peasant, the bandits cut off his nose, lips, and ears, broke his jaw, put his eyes out, and pierced him with bayonets.

The facts:

The allegation about the cruel suppression of the partisan movement in the Ussuri Valley in August–September 1918 could scarcely refer to anything other than the participation of a portion of the Twenty-seventh Infantry Battalion, USA, under Colonel Henry D. Styer, in a combined action with Japanese and Czechoslovak forces, under Japanese command, against what the American commander understood to be a force of Bolsheviks and German prisoners of war. The Twenty-seventh Infantry was the first American unit to arrive in Siberia, landing in Vladivostok on August 16. Its participation in this action was the result of a misunderstanding on the part of its commander. The Americans were kept by the Japanese in the rear echelons, presumably in order that they should not have the opportunity to check Japanese statements about the nature and strength of the enemy; and they took no part in any of the fighting.

This seems to be as close as any Americans came to participation in "the cruel repression of the partisan movement in the Ussuri valley in August–September 1918." On the arrival of the commander of the expeditionary force, General William S. Graves, on September 1, the Twenty-seventh Infantry passed entirely under his command. All American forces acted from that time on under strictest orders in implementation of General Graves's policy, which was not to involve his force in any way in Russian internal affairs, but to limit it to the guarding of those segments of the Trans-Siberian Railway and to supporting services entrusted by inter-Allied agreement to his protection.

In the pursuit of this policy, an American detachment participated, beginning September 11, 1918, in the guarding of the coal mines at Suchan, near Vladivostok. General Graves did not seek this responsibility; it was wished on him by the other Allied commanders. He made no changes in the ownership of the mines. The latter, therefore, were not "seized." In addition to the Americans, Japanese and, for a time, Russian-Cossack troops were also involved in the protection of the mines.

Up to May 1919 relations between the American detachment at Suchan

and the Russian partisan groups in nearby villages remained amicable. The Americans were even called upon on certain occasions by the villagers to act as witnesses to the truly abominable atrocities perpetrated by the local Russian Cossack detachments. As a result, General Graves did what he could to achieve the removal of those detachments from the vicinity. In May and June 1919 the partisans, who had now come under closer Communist control, began to make trouble for the operation of the mines and of the branch railway by which the mines were connected with the main line of the Trans-Siberian. In early June one American platoon suffered what its members considered to be a treacherous early morning attack in its barracks, involving severe American casualties. By the end of June the Americans found themselves obliged to take action against the partisans and to clear them out of some surrounding areas.

I am unable to find the faintest confirmation of an incident such as that described by Naida. The newspaper to which he refers (it is presumably the Vladivostok paper of the name given above, though he does not make this plain) is not available in this country. At the time this issue of the newspaper appeared, the American detachment had long been withdrawn from Suchan. The story thus must have referred to something supposed to have transpired at least several months before the story was written; but no date for the incident itself is indicated.

Other Soviet historians have also referred to atrocities said to have been perpetrated by an American by the name of Pedders; in one case he is referred to as Major John Pedders.²⁷ The roster of the Thirty-first Infantry Regiment, which provided the mine guard at Suchan, shows no officer by that name or any similar name. The United States Army records, in fact, fail to show anyone of this name, of any rank, as serving in Siberia at that time. In the examination of hundreds of documents from the official files of the Mine Guard Detachment,²⁸ I have been unable to find any reference to anyone with any such name or, indeed, to any incident resembling that which Naida relates.

There is reason to suppose that this anecdote, like others recited in various works of Soviet historians on this period, was derived from the tales told by various members of the partisan movement at the Second Congress of the Toilers of the Olginsk Raion of the Maritime Province, which took place in March 1920, just as the Americans were leaving Siberia. A comparison of

²⁷ Melchin, *Razgrom amerikano-yaponskikh interventov*, 21.

²⁸ American Expeditionary Force to Siberia, Suchan Mine Guard Detachment, War Department Records, National Archives.

these stories with what is known of the actual operations of the American force in Siberia suggests that the partisans were themselves the victims of much confusion, particularly when it came to distinguishing between the American forces, on the one hand, and the Japanese and White Russian forces (some of which wore British uniforms) on the other.

Only in one instance (July 3, 1919, in the villages of Kazanka and Novitskoe) are there known to have occurred serious violations of the rules of war on the part of one American detachment. These violations, all of which were incidental to combat, involved the shooting of at least one unarmed civilian and some unnecessary destruction of property. They flowed from orders issued by a second lieutenant who apparently lost his head in the heat of battle. His action met with most emphatic disapproval and condemnation on the part of his superior officers—a reaction with which, as a historian, I can only associate myself wholeheartedly. This is the only episode of this sort I have been able to discover in the records of the operations of the American Expeditionary Force in Siberia. It obviously is not the one that Naida describes. It involved no torture. It did not occur at the mine.

There may, of course, have been substance of some sort behind the tale Naida relates. Presumably, there is some reason why the name Pedders is mentioned instead of any other. But diligent search of the records available in this country fails to reveal what this substance might be; and nothing in the words of Naida and other Soviet historians suggests that any of them took the trouble to go beyond the Vladivostok press stories in the effort to find out what really happened.

These are only a few examples of Naida's practices in the use of historical materials out of a considerably greater number that could be cited from this one chapter to which I, for one, would have to take exception.

In the foreword to his book, Naida calls for a "merciless struggle . . . against bourgeois objectivism in science." He defines "bourgeois objectivism" as something that occurs "when certain authors, ignoring the concrete historical setting, attempt to argue this or that proposition, arbitrarily selecting isolated factlings [*fakṭiki*], citing them out of context, without relation to the whole." One suspects that for Naida "facts" are historical circumstances, or alleged or suggested circumstances, which serve a preconceived ideological interpretation of the historical process and are therefore to be treated with respect, whereas "factlings" are circumstances which, though they may be marked by the awkward quality of having actually occurred, fail to serve this preconceived interpretation, and are therefore to be despised. One must

ask forgiveness if he finds it impossible to accept this significant and revealing distinction.

To anyone with a serious interest in the eliciting of historical truth it can only be a source of sadness, and by no means of satisfaction, to be obliged to make these observations. As one who has had occasion to see something of contemporary Soviet historiography, I am happy to note, along with much that is unacceptable to me, the evidences of much else that commands respect: of seriousness of purpose, of hard work, of talent which not even the strictures of a rigid ideological discipline can wholly conceal. It is a source of deep satisfaction that we are beginning to see more of our Soviet colleagues at international gatherings of historians and to greet them as visitors to Western institutions. I am sure they will continue to find a warm welcome, even S. F. Naida, if he cares to come.

In particular, one does not object to being confronted with a different point of view. Among those of us who work in Naida's field of historical study, there is none, I am sure, who would not be free to admit that the Western countries have from time to time made serious mistakes in their relations with the Soviet Union. I know of none of us who is committed to proving that our side was without fault and that the diplomacy of the other side consisted exclusively of villainy.

If a corresponding forbearance could only be shown on the other side, I for one could hope that the study of history might yet be, as indeed it should be, one of the means by which each of our countries could gain a measure of perspective with regard to itself and by which we could begin to reduce the differences of outlook that now divide us.